

# VOTING ASSISTANCE INFORMATION FOR PCSing, SEPARATING AND DEPLOYING PERSONNEL

Your Installation Voter Assistance Office is here to help you exercise the very right you protect—your right to vote! We can help you register to vote, request an absentee ballot and notify your local election officials back home of a change of address. The information below is provided for you as you get ready to transition and are thinking of what you must do before and after you make that change in assignment, go on your deployment or separate/retire.

**Federal Post Card Application (FPCA):** The FPCA can be used to register to vote while simultaneously requesting an absentee ballot. It can also be used to submit a change of address to your local election officials. You can now go online to <a href="https://www.fvap.gov/r3/fpca/home">https://www.fvap.gov/r3/fpca/home</a> and use the FPCA Wizard that will help you register, request your absentee ballot and/or change your address while providing you with all of your state-specific information and requirements to vote!

**Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB):** The FWAB can be used as a backup in case you have already registered to vote or sent in an FPCA to both register and request your absentee ballot, but you have not yet received your absentee ballot from your State. Like the FPCA, you can go online to fill in the FWAB at <a href="https://www.fvap.gov/r3/fwab/home">https://www.fvap.gov/r3/fwab/home</a> and use the FWAB Wizard that will help you to vote in Federal elections, even filling in your candidate choices based on your State of residence!

Both the FPCA and FWAB Wizards will provide you with a filled in form. All you have to do is **print, sign and date it**, and return it to your election official via the directions provided (some States allow you to fax, and/or e-mail your signed form if you "PDF" and scan it to your computer).

**National Mail Voter Registration Form (NVRF)**: If you are separating/retiring, you'll need to advise your local election official (LEO) that you will no longer be considered a military voter. The NVRF can then be used to notify your LEO of your address change.

Your Voter Assistance Office can help you fill in and mail off your voting materials if you need the assistance. Please contact us at <a href="wote.travis@us.af.mil">wote.travis@us.af.mil</a> or via our IVA Office telephone number, 424-2976. For more information, please visit our website at on SharePoint, under Programs & Organizations tab, Voting Assistance Program.





# Absentee Voting Myths & Realities

FACT SHEET

Wherever U.S citizens go, FVAP ensures their voice is heard.

The Federal Voting Assistance Program

(FVAP) works to ensure Service members, their eligible family members and overseas citizens are aware of their right to vote and have the tools and resources to successfully do so — from anywhere in the world.



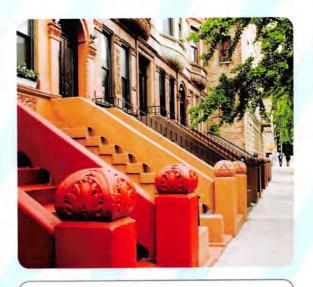
I have heard that absentee ballots only count in close elections.



No — in fact, absentee ballots submitted in accordance with State laws are counted for *every* election. The difference is that in a close election, the media reports that the outcome cannot be announced until after the absentee ballots are counted. However, all ballots are counted in the final totals for every election — and every vote (absentee or in-person) counts the same.

# >>> The rights of absentee voters are protected by law

The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act — UOCAVA for short — protects the rights of Service members and their eligible family members to vote in Federal elections regardless of where they are stationed. It also protects the Federal voting rights of U.S. citizens residing outside the United States. FVAP works to administer the Department of Defense's responsibility for UOCAVA.



## Myth

I can vote in person at a local embassy/ consulate or on a military installation.



No — actually, U.S. elections are run at the State level and citizens must communicate directly with their election official to register, request a ballot and vote. Voting Assistance is available at most embassies and consulates and in all military units to help in the completion of necessary forms. Be sure to account for submission and mail delivery time to ensure your forms are received by the State deadline.



### Myth

States all have the same election rules and deadlines for military and overseas voters.



False. States have different rules in regard to how and when the forms are returned. Visit FVAP.gov for your State-specific guidelines.

## Myth

Military spouses and dependents cannot use military absentee voting forms.



No — in fact, military family members who will be 18 years old by election day should use the same Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) and Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) that members of the Uniformed Services and overseas citizens do, even when voting absentee Stateside. Dependents attending college overseas should also use those forms.



## Myth

I am a U.S. citizen who was born overseas and has never lived in the U.S. — I pay taxes but cannot exercise my right to vote.

# Reality

It depends. A growing number of States now allow U.S. citizens who were born abroad but never resided in the U.S. to vote using the address where a parent or other relative is eligible to vote. Visit FVAP.gov to see a current list of States that allow these U.S. citizens to vote.

### Myth

Voting will affect the tax status of overseas citizens.



It depends. Voting for Federal office candidates will not affect your Federal or State tax liability. Depending on the laws of your State, voting for State or local offices may affect your State income tax liability. If you are concerned about your State tax status, consult legal counsel.



### Myth

Absentee ballots are not secret.



Not true. State absentee ballots and the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot are designed with a "Secrecy Envelope" allowing for the separation of the voter's identity from the cast ballot. Voting Assistance Officers also ensure voters casting absentee ballots on Department of Defense (DoD) facilities are able to do so in a private and independent manner. Local election officials are professionals who go to great lengths in their ballot handling procedures to ensure your vote, and personal information, are kept private.

### Myth

I can't vote if I'm deployed.



False — you absolutely can vote while deployed. If you're registered to vote while deployed and you don't get your State ballot in time to vote from your location, you can use the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) found at FVAP.gov. Remember to submit the form at least 30 days before the scheduled election.

#### GO TO FVAP.GOV FOR MORE INFORMATION

Monday–Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. ET Phone: 1-800-438-VOTE (8683) I DSN: 425-1584 I Email: vote@fvap.gov Go to FVAP.gov and click on "contact" to find where to send your election materials. Media inquiries: media@fvap.gov Facebook.com/DoDFVAP and Twitter @FVAP



### The Federal Fost Card Application

FACT SHEET

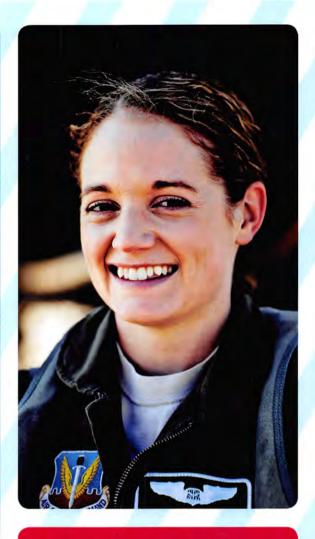
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The Federal Post Card Application (FPCA, SF-76) allows eligible U.S. citizens to apply to register to vote, request an absentee ballot and/or update their contact information with their local election office.

The FPCA is the primary method of communication between you and your election official. The information you provide on this form is all the local election office has to determine if you meet the State voter registration requirements, which election materials to send you and where and how to send you a ballot.



# >>> Where to get an FPCA

Online — FVAP.gov offers an online assistant that walks you through completion of the form, and provides a populated fillable PDF. Once completed, do not forget to print and sign the form before submitting it to your local election office.

**Hardcopy** — Hardcopies of the form are available at all military installations and U.S. embassies and consulates worldwide.



# Facts you need to know about the FPCA

- The length of time the ballot request is valid varies by State. To ensure you receive an absentee ballot for each election in which you are eligible to vote, you should complete a new FPCA annually and with every change of your mailing address, or at least 90 days prior to the election you want to vote in.
- The current FPCA was redesigned in 2013 and is incorporated into the online assistant at FVAP.gov. If you only have access to an older hardcopy version, you can still use it. Please refer to the latest State requirements and deadlines at FVAP.gov or in the current Voting Assistance Guide.
- To process your request and provide you a ballot in a timely manner, your election official may need to contact you for further information or clarification.
   Be sure to provide contact information (email is preferable for quick communication) in block 5 of the FPCA.
- Block 9 of the FPCA is your opportunity to provide extra information to your election official to help them determine your residence eligibility or other details necessary to help ensure you receive your ballot.

Looking for more information on completing the FPCA? FVAP.gov has everything that you need, from an online assistant to walk you through the form, to State-specific deadlines and rules.

 Submit your completed FPCA in accordance with your State's laws. Link to your State's submission requirements at our website: FVAP.gov/vao/vag.

# >>> Will my FPCA be processed?



All FPCAs submitted on time and according to State rules will be processed. Here are the most common mistakes to look out for:

- Illegible handwriting. If you prefer to type, you may complete
  the FPCA form online and print it out.
- No signature. Don't forget to sign and date your completed FPCA before mailing to your local election office.
- Submitted in a manner not in accordance with State law.
- Received after registration or request deadline. Deadlines vary by State.\*

Your local election official is required to contact you if your form is rejected, but states differ in notifying voters of a successful application. We encourage you to contact your local election officials\* to confirm that your FPCA was successfully processed.

\*Find your State's requirements and contact information for election officials at: FVAP.gov/FPCA

# How and where to submit your FPCA

#### · Double-check for completion and sign

- Look over your completed FPCA to ensure you have provided all the information required by your State, including a complete voting residence address, current mailing address in that State and all other contact information.
- Make sure the information provided is clear and legible.
- Don't forget to sign and date the FPCA.

#### · Submit by email, fax or postal mail

- Check the Voting Assistance Guide at FVAP.gov/vao/vag to determine if your State allows the FPCA to be submitted by either email or fax. Follow the instructions for electronic submission provided.
- Hardcopy FPCAs can be folded and sealed using the form's adhesive edging; online FPCAs printed must be placed in an envelope for mailing.
- If mailing the FPCA through the U.S. Postal Service, APO/FPO or diplomatic pouch, it can be sent postage-paid using the mail indicia available at FVAP.gov. Mailing the FPCA using a foreign country's postal service requires local postage and should have "USA" in the address line of the mailing envelope or folded hardcopy form.

#### · Follow up to check registration status

 You can contact your local election officials to confirm that your FPCA was successfully processed. Find current contact information at FVAP.gov.



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# When to submit your FWAB

If you have registered to vote and requested your absentee ballot by the State's deadline but have not received your regular State ballot within 30 days of the election, or longer if you are living in an area where mail delivery is not reliable, FVAP recommends submitting the FWAB as a backup. If you receive your State ballot after submitting the FWAB, vote and return it as well. If both your State and return it as well. If both your State deadline, only your State ballot and your FWAB are received by the deadline, only your State belot submitted.

NOTE: Some States allow you to use the FWAB for registration if you did not submit an FPCA. For information about your State's requirements, visit FVAP.gov/FWAB.

### Where to get a FWAB

FVAP provides an online FWAB assistant to walk you through the form and provide you with applicable candidate names for Federal offices. Simply select your State from the drop-down and choose "Get My Ballot Now" or "Get My Backup Ballot" to begin. Once completed, do not forget to print and sign the form before forget to print and sign the form before dought.

For your convenience, the most current FWAB available may be printed out at FVAP.gov. Forms are also available in hardcopy at military installations, U.S. have an older hardcopy version of the form, please use it in conjunction with your current State guidelines.



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THERT SHEET

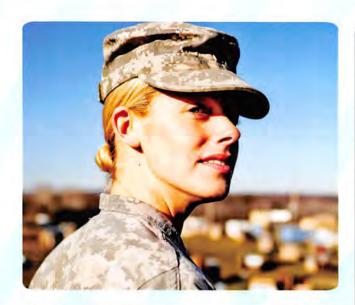
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# The Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot

The Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB, SF 186) is for use by Service members, their eligible family members living outside their voting jurisdiction and U.S. citizens residing overseas. This write-in absentee ballot can be used as a backup when you are living outside your voting residence, have applied for a regular State ballot through the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA, SF 76) and have not received the requested State ballot in time to vote by the election deadline.





### >>> Will my FWAB be counted?



All FWABs submitted on time and according to State rules will be counted. However, here are the most common reasons for rejection:

- · Illegible handwriting. If you prefer to type your information, you may complete the FWAB form online and print it out.
- · No signature. Don't forget to sign and date your completed FWAB before mailing to your local election
- · No ballot request on file. Ballot requests can be made using an FPCA. Not all States require you to first submit an FPCA.\*
- Transmitted in a manner not allowed by State law. Some States accept an emailed or faxed FWAB, while others require a hardcopy.\*
- · Received after the deadline. Deadlines vary by
- · Not witnessed. Some States require witness signatures.\*
- · Voter signatures on file don't match the submitted
- Not filled out completely or accurately. Look over your completed FWAB to ensure you have provided all the information required by your State, including a complete voting residence address (P.O. Box addresses are not valid).

\*Specific State requirements at FVAP.gov/FWAB.

### Cast your ballot by submitting a completed FWAB

The FWAB has two distinct sections: (1) the Voter's Declaration/ Affirmation, which serves to identify and authenticate you with the local election official processing the form and (2) the ballot and security envelope, which allow you to make your selections and keep those choices secret. For the hardcopy or online version of the FWAB, both the Declaration/Affirmation and security envelope (with voted ballot inside) are mailed to your election official.

#### Step 1: Complete and Sign



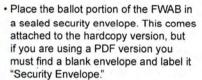
· Complete one of two versions of the official Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot: (1) hardcopy or (2) PDF version from the online FWAB assistant or fillable form.\*



Complete and sign the attached Voter's Declaration/ Affirmation form.

#### Step 2: Seal







· Place the Voter's Declaration/Affirmation form and the sealed security envelope in a larger mailing envelope. This comes attached to the hardcopy version, but you must provide one yourself if using a PDF version.

#### Step 3: Fill Out Envelope



- · In the upper left corner, enter your current mailing address and the date of the election in which you just voted.
- · Under "To," enter the name and mailing address of the local election office\* to which you are sending the packet.

#### Step 4: Postage

- · Within the U.S.: The form is postage paid in U.S. mail. This information is included on the hardcopy version's mailing envelope and an envelope template can be downloaded at FVAP.gov if you are using a PDF version.
- · Outside of the U.S.: The form is postage paid in U.S. mail, to include APO/FPO and diplomatic pouches. If using foreign postal systems, put the correct amount of local postage on the front of the envelope, in the top right corner.
- \*For information about your State's requirements, how to transmit the form and how to contact your election official, visit FVAP.gov/FWAB.

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Uniformed Service Members and Their Eligible Family Members

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# What is a voting residence and why is it important?

Your voting residence is within your State of legal residence or domicile. It is the true, fixed address that you consider your permanent home and where you had a physical presence. Your State of legal residence is used for State income tax purposes, and determines eligibility to vote for Federal and State elections and qualification for in-state fuition rates.

State of legal residence and voting residence is sometimes mistaken for home of record. While your voting residence may be the same as your home of record at the beginning of your military career, if you change your legal residence or domicile at any point you also need to update your voting residence.

To claim a new legal residence or domicile, consult your legal counsel or military legal assistance office, as there may be other factors to consider, such as tax







# Military Service members

You may only have one legal voting residence at a time.

Service members, your voting residence should be within the State listed on your Leave and Earnings Statement which defines your State for withholding State taxes.

Don't confuse voting residence with home of record. Your home of record is the place you lived when you entered the military. It does not change while you are on active duty. Your voting residence may be the same as your home of record but needs to be updated if and when you decide to establish a new State of legal residence.

Your State of legal residence is not automatically changed when you are assigned to a new duty location.

It may be changed with your approval by submitting the appropriate paperwork to your finance officer. However, you should first consult legal counsel.

You have the option to **establish residency or domicile each time you are transferred** to a new location. Once you change your residence or domicile, you may not revert to a previous residence without re-establishing a new physical presence according to residency laws of that State.

You can't vote in person at embassies, consulates or military installations. The online assistant at FVAP.gov or your Voting Assistance Officer can help you complete the necessary absentee voting forms found at FVAP.gov and provide additional information.

### Maintain current contact info

Your local election official needs your current contact information to reach you come election time. The most efficient way is to complete a Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) annually, with every change of address and at least 90 days prior to the election you want to vote in. That way your election official knows you want to register in that State, how to reach you, and most importantly where to send your ballot!



# Spouses and eligible family members

Your State of legal residence or domicile — and accompanying voting residence — may differ from your sponsor's, as it isn't assumed upon marriage. The Military Spouse Residency Relief Act (MSRRA) allows you to retain the same residence or domicile that your Service member has established so long as you also established residency or domicile in the same State.

MSRRA does not permit you to choose any State; you must establish residency or domicile. Ways to do this may include voting, paying taxes, owning property, holding a driver's license and registering a vehicle. Requirements vary by State; consult legal counsel to discuss tax implications and other effects of MSRRA. As a military spouse you can:

- 1) retain your sponsor's or Service member's residency or domicile
- keep your current, established residency or domicile
- 3) take the appropriate steps to establish a new residency or domicile

Some children turn 18 while their family is stationed overseas. To vote, they should use the last U.S. address they had before departing to the current duty station.

#### **CONTACT FVAP**

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# Absentee Voting Eligibility for You and Your Family

As the family member of a Uniformed Service member, your absentee voting rights are covered. This means if you live outside your legal voting jurisdiction you can vote absentee in all Federal elections. Rules are different for Spouses and eligible family members; the Military Spouse Residency Relief eligible family members; and voting-age dependants Act (MSRRA) covers spouses, and voting-age dependants should check with the State in which they plan to register, as State rules vary.

FVAP.gov provides resources for you to send your vote home.



### **Getting Started**

Most States require you to complete an absentee ballot application to start the absentee voting process. FVAP encourages the use of the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) to start the absentee voting process as it is standardized for use across all States and territories and will extend your eligibility to receive a ballot for all Federal elections in which you are eligible based on Statespecific guidelines. The FPCA acts as specific guidelines. The FPCA acts as both a registration and absentee ballot request form.

FVAP encourages military voters and their eligible family members to submit a new FPCA every year, with every change of address and at least 90 days before the election you want to vote in. Steps for submitting an FPCA and requesting your ballot can be found on the back of this sheet.



### **Voting Residence**

Your State of legal residence or domicile— and accompanying voting residence — may differ from your sponsor's, as it isn't assumed upon marriage. The Military Spouse Residency Relief Act (MSRRA) allows you to retain the same residence or domicile that your Service member has established so long as you also established residency or domicile in the same State.

MSRRA does not permit you to choose any State; you must establish residency or domicile. Ways to do this may include voting, paying taxes, owning property, holding a driver's license and registering a vehicle. Requirements vary by State; consult legal counsel to discuss tax implications and other effects of MSRRA. As a military spouse you can:

retain your sponsor's or Service member's residency or domicile (if already the same)
 keep your current, established residency or domicile (if different from your sponsor's)
 take the appropriate steps to establish a new residency or domicile

Some children turn 18 while their family is stationed overseas. To vote, they should use the last U.S. address they had before departing to the current duty station.

# >>> Transitioning or Relocating?

As a military spouse, we understand you are extremely mobile. Since voting materials are sent as non-forwardable postal materials it is critical to provide your local election official with your new address after every move. The address you provide is their only way to contact you at your new home. You can use the FPCA at FVAP.gov to update your address with your election official.

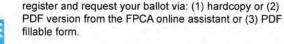
### Share this Information!

As a military spouse you have access to a close network of other military members and spouses. Help us make sure that everyone has the opportunity to vote! Tell them about FVAP.gov and the steps to take in order to vote absentee.

### Register, Request and Vote your Ballot

It only takes a few quick steps to make sure your vote is counted no matter where you are in the world. The FPCA enables you to register to vote and request your absentee ballot. You can use the FPCA online assistant, fill out the PDF or pick up a hardcopy version from your Installation Voting Assistance Officer.

#### Register and Request your Ballot





 Sign the form and affix the appropriate postage to the envelope. See FVAP.gov for information on mailing.

· Complete the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) to

· Return the completed FPCA to your local election official.

#### Receive your Absentee Ballot

 Your ballot may be sent to you via mail, email or fax dependent on your State's requirements.

#### Vote and Return your Ballot

· Vote your ballot by marking the appropriate selections.



- Sign the form and affix the appropriate postage to the envelope. See FVAP.gov for information on mailing.
- · Return the completed ballot to your local election official.

#### Out of Time? Complete a Back-Up Ballot!

If you are registered and requested your ballot on time but have not received it 45 days prior to the election you want to vote in, FVAP suggests you complete a Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB). The FWAB can be found at FVAP.gov and can be completed using the online assistant, or using a hardcopy version from a unit Voting Assistance Officer.

 Complete and sign the FWAB's Voter Declaration/ Affirmation using your State's instructions at FVAP.gov.



Vote the ballot by writing in a candidate or party name.
 Detach the ballot from the security envelope, fold it, insert it into the security envelope and seal it.



 Fold and place the completed Voter Declaration/ Affirmation and the sealed security envelope into the accompanying "Mailing Envelope." Seal. If using the online FWAB, use your own envelope as the mailing envelope. You may print postage paid insignia on your envelope by using the envelope template available here.



Address and mail the FWAB to your local election official.
 Be sure to include your return address, and affix postage if using a foreign postal service.

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### Separating from Active Duty Voter Assistance

FACT SHEET

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# Still on Active Duty?

While on active duty, you are covered by The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act; commonly referred to as UOCAVA. UOCAVA citizens are active members of the Uniformed Services, the Merchant Marine, their family members and U.S. citizens residing outside the United States. This Act provides the legal basis for absentee voting requirements for these citizens.

# Moving Abroad After Separation?

If you will be moving abroad after separating from the military, you will remain a UOCAVA voter. You should submit a new Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) with your updated mailing address and new classification selection. The FPCA can be found at FVAP.gov. Your voting residence address in the U.S. will remain the same.

# Separating from Active Duty?

Don't let your vote get lost in transition! Notify your local election official of your change in status and that you will be voting locally in future elections. Steps can be found on the back of this sheet.

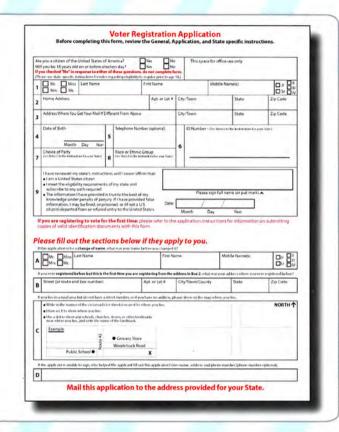
Local election official contact information can be found at FVAP. gov. Once you have alerted your election official, you should complete a National Voter Registration Form to register as a civilian in your new voting jurisdiction.



### National Voter Registration Form

The National Mail Voter Registration Form can be used to register U.S. citizens to vote, to update registration information due to a change of name, make a change of address or to register with a political party. You must follow the state-specific instructions listed for your state. They begin on page 3 of the form and are listed alphabetically by state. After filling out this form, you must sign your name where indicated and send it to your state or local election office for processing. Be sure you mail it in an envelope with the proper amount of postage.





### **Need Assistance?**

Your Voting Assistance Officer (VAO) can help! Your Unit VAO can help you fill in and mail your voting materials if you need the assistance. You can find contact information for your Installation Voter Assistance Office at:

www.fvap.gov/info/contact

### Notify Your Local Election Official

As you transition back to civilian life, you will no longer be covered by the UOCAVA. You and your voting-age family members should notify your local election official of your change in voter registration status and update your information to vote locally. You may do this in either one or two easy steps:

If you have voted absentee or locally and are **staying** in the same voting residence after separation:

Step 1: Notify your election official of your change in status and that you will be voting at the poll site in future elections. FVAP.gov provides a sample letter for your convenience.



If you voted absentee or locally at the polls and are moving to a new State or county after separation:

Step 1: Notify your election official of your change in status and that you will no longer be voting in that jurisdiction. FVAP.gov provides a sample letter for your convenience.



Step 2: Complete a National Voter Registration Form to register as a civilian.





\*Additional information about registering to vote locally can be found on the State-specific election websites available at FVAP.gov/links.

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